

pleased to support Senator LEVIN and Senator McCain's amendment stripping funds for the F-22 from the bill. The Defense Department has stated that it does not need any more of these aircraft, and that these funds are urgently needed to meet the real-world threats that we face today. I am also pleased that the President has reduced spending on redundant and unproven missile defense technologies. I am disappointed, however, that this bill contains billions of dollars of earmarks not requested by the Pentagon. This wasteful spending takes money away from our troops and endangers our national security.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, today, I wish to speak on the Victims of Iranian Censorship, or VOICE, Act which passed last night as an amendment to the Defense authorization bill.

I was pleased to introduce this bill with Senators McCain, Lieberman, Casey, and Graham, and I thank the cosponsors for their shared commitment to this issue. I also thank Chairman Levin and Ranking Member McCain for helping to secure its passage.

The VOICE Act supports freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression in Iran, and authorizes funding for the Broadcasting Board of Governors to expand transmission capability and programming on Radio Farda and the Persian News Network.

It supports the development of technology to counter ongoing Internet censorship, and promotes online U.S.-Iranian educational and cultural exchanges.

Passage of the VOICE Act is especially timely given the suppression of free flowing information in and out of Iran since the June 12 presidential election.

While the people of Iran enthusiastically participated in these elections, it is painfully clear that the long road to democracy does not end there. A true democracy values fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, which is protected under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In fact, in 1976, Iran was one of the first countries to ratify—and it is still a party to—this U.N. treaty, which also protects the right to hold opinions without interference, and affirms the right to receive and impart information in writing, print, or through any other media.

Unfortunately, these international obligations have not been upheld in Iran, where the Internet and text-messaging services are monitored and blocked, and U.S.-funded television and radio broadcasting is increasingly jammed. News reporting has been censored, access for journalists has been restricted, and specific media outlets have been targeted and shutdown. Foreign journalists have had their press credentials cancelled and equipment confiscated.

They have been confined to their hotels and told their visas would not be

renewed. Foreign press bureaus in Tehran have been closed, and others have been instructed to suspend all their Farsi-language news.

For Iranian journalists, the stakes have been even higher. Numerous Iranian journalists have been detained, imprisoned, assaulted, and intimidated since the elections. And journalists have been instructed to file stories solely from their offices, which has limited their ability to provide timely and accurate news.

Regarding interference of international broadcasting, shortwave and medium wave transmissions of the Farsi-language Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Radio Farda have been partially blocked. And satellite broadcasts, including those of the Voice of America's Persian News Network and the British Broadcasting Corporation, have been intermittently jammed.

These are popular services in Iran, which serve as a vital source of news and entertainment for the Iranian people, especially for those seeking access to credible information and news.

Since the election, efforts to suppress the free flow of information have not focused on the media alone. Blogs and social networking sites have been targeted as well, including popular websites such as Facebook and Twitter. Short message service in Iran has been blocked—preventing text messaging and jamming internet sites that utilize such services—and cell phone service has been partially shut-down. These restrictions have prevented the free flow of information, and precluded Iranian citizens from accessing unimpeded means of communication.

Iran did not develop this sophisticated Internet-censorship technology on its own. In fact, reports indicate that numerous companies including some with U.S. subsidiaries—have provided Iran with the software and technological expertise to block the Internet, and monitor online use to gather information about individuals.

Unfortunately, little is known about the specifics surrounding these sales, which likely including "deep packet inspection" technology, which, among other things, allows the government to read, block, and censor the Internet. In addition to giving it the capability to spread disinformation by modifying, tampering with, and diverting emails.

This behavior is unconscionable, and unfortunately not enough is known about the sale of Internet-restricting technology to countries including, but not limited to, Iran. That is why the VOICE Act requires a report to Congress examining the sale of technology that has furthered Iran's ability to filter and monitor the Internet, as well as disrupt cell phone and Internet use.

Our bill supports the Iranian people as they take steps to peacefully express their opinions and aspirations, and seek access to means of communication and news. It expresses respect for the sovereignty, proud history, and rich culture of the Iranian people, and

recognizes the universal values of freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

Most importantly, it supports the Iranian people as they seek access to unimpeded Internet access, cellular phone communications, and credible news.

I am pleased the Senate has adopted a bipartisan bill that supports the Iranian people as they seek unfettered access to news and other information.

It is critical that we continue to support for free speech, free press, and free expression in Iran and in every country throughout the world.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I wish to speak about women in Afghanistan. After months of collaborative discussions between women's advocacy groups and the Government of Afghanistan, the Elimination of Violence Against Women Act was just signed by Executive decree. I applaud the women who pushed for this bill, and those in the government who jointly prepared it. It represents transparency and collaboration between civil society and the government, something we should all congratulate. The bill will head to Parliament for final review when it reconvenes next week. It is my strong hope that Parliament review the law and pass it without delay, ensuring all protections remain intact. This bill provides real criminal sanctions for violence against women, and puts specific responsibilities onto the shoulders of government ministries. When we think of the abuse and repression exercised against women during the Taliban regime, it is hard not to feel encouraged by the very existence of this act, let alone its prospect for enactment.

Many, quite plausibly, will say that this law cannot be fully implemented anywhere in Afghanistan, as access to justice for women in the courts and in traditional councils is all too often out of reach, and because of the societal discrimination that women still suffer. Justice must be accessible to women in Afghanistan on an equal basis to men, or Afghanistan will never tap into the true, vast potential of the women of that country. This law is a giant step for the entire country in rejecting violence against women, but now the Parliament must take the final step to pass the law as it is, with all protections intact.

I must also mention the controversial Shia Personal Status Law that was also signed by Executive decree. It was drafted without transparency, and aimed to codify degrading practices that exist in some households and communities. Unlike the Elimination of Violence Against Women Act, civil society was not included during the drafting and debate of the law in Parliament. While women's civil organizations were able to force some amendments to the bill just before the president's signature, they were not able to

fully cleanse the bill of some harmful provisions. Now that the bill has been signed, I call on the Government of Afghanistan to communicate widely and openly about the final substance of the law.

The timing of this is vital. Afghanistan is about to go to the polls for presidential and provincial elections, and all eyes will be watching how and to what extent women participate. Women's access to the polls is imperative, and the value of their vote must be considered by the candidates.

#### JOHN PODESTA'S CULINARY SKILLS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, our friend, Marion Burros, a superb writer on all matters culinary and otherwise, has written a most entertaining profile of John Podesta for Politico.

John Podesta is a friend of decades and someone Marcelle and I admire greatly. It is not only his and his wife Mary's talent in everything from the law to politics, but it is also the Podestas a privileged few see when they are preparing feasts in their District of Columbia home. Watching them is like watching a symphony where the enjoyment continues throughout the evening.

I can think of a number of times we settled all the problems of the world through laughter, food, discussions of our families, and on, in their kitchen. Anyone who doesn't relish such a feast for weeks after has no sense of culinary excellence—and I have never known anyone to leave disappointed.

Mr. President, so others might enjoy the Politico article, I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Politico, July 10, 2009]

JOHN PODESTA, A SEASONED HAND

(By Marian Burros)

John Podesta may be best known as one of Washington's consummate inside players. But he is also his family's chief cook, grocery shopper and, apparently, bottle washer—and can put on a five-course meal for six in the space of three hours without assistance, and with a bare minimum of advance preparation.

The adjectives used to describe Podesta's political skills—methodical and disciplined—apply equally to his well-honed cooking techniques, learned from his mother long before he became one of the capital's most influential Democratic power brokers.

No recipes, no timing notes. "I consult cookbooks for ideas," he said. "I don't use recipes. I don't tend to cook like a chemist."

What he does do is cook and talk at the same time, a skill generally found only among professionals. And he talks the game of a seasoned cook while he chops, using the proper knife technique. Interspersed are funny, self-deprecating stories, including tales of his tour of duty as a guide wearing an 18th-century costume that involved slaughtering and roasting pigs.

But more on that later.

Hard-driving is the adjective often applied to Podesta's style in all of the various incar-

nations of his Washington career—as a lobbyist with his brother Tony, as a staffer for Sen. Pat Leahy (D-Vt.), as chief of staff in the Clinton White House, as co-chairman of the Obama transition team and as chief executive of the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank he helped found. When he relaxes, if that is a word that can be applied to the tightly wound Podesta, it's through two favorite pursuits: jogging and cooking.

He also collects contemporary art, is a UFO aficionado and loves nothing more than to sit in the front car of a roller coaster with his wife, Mary, as they hurtle along, holding hands above their heads. A feat, he notes proudly, achieved with the purchase of senior citizen tickets. He runs marathons, completing his latest in Rome in 4:06. In fact, he plans his menus while he runs. "I kept going back and forth between pork and fish," he said about dinner on a recent evening.

"Cooking is what I do to relax," he said. "It's much easier to see the fruits of your labor. It's fun."

Even better is cooking for crowds. "Cooking for 50 needs organization, preparation and thought," Podesta said. "One part is creative; one part you have to get your mind focused. That's challenging."

As a young boy, he was expected to finish the dinners his mother, who worked at night, left on the stove. Mary Podesta was Greek-American, his father Italian-American, so he learned to cook dishes from both cultures. "I make a pretty mean moussaka, pastitsio, baklava and spanakopita," he said, reeling off Greek dishes that are complicated, the latter two made with the paper-thin phyllo dough, requiring great manual dexterity.

"My mother had an intuitive sense of cooking and chemistry," he said. "She was a fixture in Washington. When my brother was hosting a fundraiser, she would cook and sit in the kitchen. She was very liberal and very opinionated, and this was the age of Republican control of Congress."

"A reporter was talking to her, and she was going off on Trent Lott, [Newt] Gingrich and [Tom] DeLay. It was the most embarrassing moment for us, but the reporter took pity on her and didn't write about it."

As Podesta explains it, with a Greek mother and Italian father, speaking your mind was a core value of his childhood. "We were a blue-collar Chicago family," he said. "The kitchen table was not a model of decorum. It was all right to yell."

His heritage, he once told an interviewer, also explains his hot temper and accounts for the occasional appearance of Skippy, his sarcastic and ill-humored alter ego.

Flashing a touch of his well-known wit, he said it also explains "why I can't understand why Obama doesn't hold grudges."

The meal began with the risotto, topped with chopped fresh radicchio and basil and served with a 2004 Fonterutoli Chianti Classico. Podesta put the tilapia on to cook while the guests finished the risotto. It was served with all of the vegetable dishes and a 2006 Kistler Carneros chardonnay.

He wondered aloud if he should serve the salad and then disappeared into the basement for the mandoline to slice the fennel and red peppers, which he dressed with olive oil and lemon juice.

His wife, Mary, arrived home from her book club just in time for the dessert of berries in prosecco, which was served with Perrier Jouet rosé. She confirmed that he did most of the cooking and the dishes.

"Having a husband who does all the cooking is pretty great," said Mary Podesta, who is also a lawyer. Asked if she had a say in what is served, there was a pause: "We negotiate."

Podesta cooks dinner every night he is in town, as he did when his three children lived

at home, and thought nothing of introducing them to exotic foods like frogs' legs, sweetbreads and squid. He and his wife seldom eat out and entertain about once a week.

It's no different from his remarkable ability to impose discipline on a bunch of unruly Democrats—or the fractious factions of the Clinton West Wing.

For this informal Sunday dinner for six, the 60-year-old Podesta was dressed in a polo shirt, shorts, sports socks and sneakers. He led his guests directly to the modest kitchen in his Northwest D.C. home, where most surfaces were covered with what was soon to be dinner. There were tomato halves soon to be topped with pesto (the one recipe he had made in advance); arborio rice simmering on the stove, on its way to being risotto; a pan of sautéed leeks and radicchio to be added to the risotto; Brussels sprouts to be roasted with thyme; bok choy and a baking dish, which would soon hold tilapia sprinkled with olives and capers and cooked in parchment.

Cocktails, or the kibitzing hour, took place in the kitchen, where simple snacks to go with the Jacob's Creek sparkling wine included dried apricots stuffed with goat cheese.

Podesta likened dinner preparations to training for "Iron Chef," though there was no secret ingredient and his only competition was with himself, to pull off the dinner without a hitch.

He has been, however, prevailed upon to participate in celebrity cook-offs that Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) holds to raise campaign cash. He had only this to say about the results: "When the lobbyists judge, usually a member of Congress wins. When Nora Pouillon (the chef and owner of Restaurant Nora) judged it, I won." His winning dish was grilled tuna in the style of vitello tonnato.

Running 30 miles a week explains, in part, why he is reed-thin, despite his love of food. But then, he has never liked breakfast and hardly ever goes out to business lunches, considering them "an occupational hazard."

As Podesta talked, he went back and forth between the dishes, his timing impeccable. He doesn't rattle easily.

A few things were bought the day before, the rest that morning. His choice of grocery stores reflects his frugal nature as much as his cooking skills. Before Balducci's bit the dust, he avoided it. "Too expensive," he said. While he goes to Magruder's and Whole Foods, he also goes to Costco and Rodman's, a drugstore better known for its discounted gourmet products than for filling prescriptions.

His stove also makes a statement about his frugality. "I'm not into the whole Vulcan thing and all that," he said. "I do very well with a Sears stove. I'm always bargain hunting; I could totally live on Social Security." Not counting his fine wine collection or his contemporary art, perhaps—though continuing the frugal theme, he insists the art is "mostly picked up at bargain-basement prices."

The hunt for bargains is a testament to his mother's influence. "My parents were completely Depression people, but we always ate well, even during the war," he said. "My mother scrounged around for bargains till the day she died."

They even cooked their own wedding supper for 80—with the help of a few relatives.

Talk of pig roasting and slaughter kept popping up during dinner and was the last tale Podesta told before the guests left. To earn money while attending law school at Georgetown, he spent two years working at Turkey Run Farm in McLean, now called the Claude Moore Colonial Farm, an 18th-century re-creation.

He dressed in britches, a blousy linen shirt, floppy hat and homemade shoes and learned how to butcher and roast a pig.